

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A printing apparatus comprising:
a printing section adapted to print images on photographic media;
and
an automatic backprinting assembly adapted to print information on a back side of photographic media;
said automatic backprinting assembly comprising a movable ink jet printhead which is movable between at least a printing position to print on the back side of the photographic media and a priming position where the printhead is pressurized to force a stream of ink through discharge jets of the printhead.
2. A printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said automatic backprinting assembly further comprises:
an enclosure having an opening positioned so as to face the discharge jets of said printhead when said printhead is in said priming position, said enclosure being adapted to catch the stream of ink that is forced through the discharge jets of the printhead.
3. A printing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein a wiper pad is positioned at an end of a wall of said enclosure, said wiper pad being adapted to wipe a discharge jet end of said printhead when said printhead moves from said priming position to said printing position so as to remove excess ink from said printhead.
4. A printing apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a removable ink tray, wherein said printhead and said enclosure are mounted on said ink tray and said ink tray is movable between a non-operative position located partially outside of said printing apparatus and an operative position located within said printing apparatus.
5. A printing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein an absorbent material is provided on a surface of said ink tray and within said enclosure.

6. A printing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said wiper pad is formed from a material which has little or no loose fibers.

7. A printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said printhead is provided on a rotary moving device which is adapted to rotate the printhead between said printing position and said priming position.

8. A printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said printhead is mounted on a pivoting device which is adapted to pivot said printhead between said printing position and said priming position.

9. A printing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said rotary moving device has a center of rotation which causes the printhead to translate away from the backside of said media as soon as rotary motion of said printhead is initiated.

10. A printing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said pivoting device is adapted to cause the printhead to translate away from the backside of said media as soon as a pivoting motion of said printhead is initiated.

11. A printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said printhead is adapted to provide at least alphanumeric information on the backside of said media.

12. A backprinting assembly adapted to print information on a backside of photographic media, the backprinting assembly comprising:

a movable ink jet printhead which is movable between at least a printing position to print on the backside of the photographic media and a priming position where the printhead is pressurized to force a stream of ink through discharge jets of the printhead.

13. A backprinting assembly according to claim 12, further comprising:

an enclosure having an opening positioned so as to face the discharge jets of said printhead when said printhead is in said priming position, said enclosure being adapted to catch the stream of ink that is forced through the discharge jets of the printhead.

14. A backprinting assembly according to claim 13, wherein a wiper pad is positioned at an end of a wall of said enclosure, said wiper pad being adapted to wipe a discharge jet end of said printhead when said printhead moves from said priming position to said printing position so as to remove excess ink from said printhead.

15. A backprinting assembly according to claim 13, further comprising an ink tray, wherein said printhead and said enclosure are mounted on said ink tray.

16. A backprinting assembly according to claim 15, wherein an absorbent material is provided on a surface of said ink tray and within said enclosure.

17. A backprinting assembly according to claim 14, wherein said wiper pad is formed from a material which has little or no loose fibers.

18. A backprinting assembly according to claim 12, wherein said printhead is provided on a rotary moving device which is adapted to rotate the printhead between said printing position and said priming position.

19. A backprinting assembly according to claim 12, wherein said printhead is mounted on a pivoting device which is adapted to pivot said printhead between said printing position and said priming position.

20. A backprinting assembly according to claim 18, wherein said rotary moving device has a center of rotation which causes the printhead to translate away from the backside of said media as soon as rotary motion of said printhead is initiated.

21. A backprinting assembly according to claim 19, wherein said pivoting moving device is adapted to cause the printhead to translate away from the backside of said media as soon as a pivoting motion of said printhead is initiated.

22. A method of providing information on a backside of photographic media during a photographic printing process, the method comprising the steps of:

- inserting photographic media into a photographic printer;
- printing an image onto a frontside of the photographic media;
- backprinting information onto a backside of the media by positioning a printhead in a printing position and directing ink from said printhead onto the backside of said media;
- moving the printhead from said printing position after a predetermined period of time to a priming position where discharge jets of said printhead face an enclosure;
- pressurizing said printhead while in said priming position to force a stream of ink through the discharge jets of the printhead and into said enclosure;
- and
- moving said printhead back to said printing position.

23. A method according to claim 22, further comprising:

- wiping a discharge jet end of said printhead when said printhead moves from said priming position to said printing position so as to remove excess ink from said printhead.

24. A method according to claim 22, wherein said step of moving said printhead from said printing position to said priming position comprises translating said printhead away from the backside of said media as soon as motion of the printhead is initiated.